

Lake Michigan Coastal Program Advisory Board Special Meeting

December 10, 2003

6:15 p.m.

Genesis Convention Center, One Genesis Plaza
Gary, Indiana

MINUTES

Mark Reshkin opened the meeting at 6:15 and welcomed all who attended. After introductions, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ATTENDANCE

Board members present: Henry Bliss (Porter Co. Citizen), Dorreen Carey (City of Gary), Edgar Corns (Agriculture), Dale Engquist (Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore), John Heidebreder (Historical Resources), J. Allen Johnson (Lake County Citizen), Paul Labus (Local Land Trusts), Charlotte Read (Environment), Mark Reshkin (Universities), John Smolar (Lake Dependent Uses), Ian Steele (Town of Michiana Shores), Don Wadleigh (USACOE), Liz McCloskey (USFWS), Bill Moran (NRCS), David Pilz (City of Valparaiso)

Board members absent: Rudolph Clay (Lake County Commissioner), John Evans (Porter County Commissioner), William Hager (LaPorte County Commissioner), Tom Keilman (Industry and Business), Stephen Mosher (Port of Indiana), Judy Beck (EPA), Niles Parker (IDOC), Jack Hires (Lake Michigan Aquatic Resources), Kevin Breitzke (NIRPC), Dionne Wisniewski (Tourism), Jim Juricic (INDOT), Brian Miller (Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant), and Tim Morgan (Local Parks and Recreation).

Other interested parties present: Mark Savinski (Rep. Visclosky's office), Tom Anderson (Citizen), Denarie Kane (City of Hobart), Robert Buskirk (INDOT)

Lake Michigan Coastal Program Staff present: Mike Molnar (LMCP Program Manager), Jenny Kintzele (LMCP Program Specialist)

OLD BUSINESS

Mission Statement Development-

Mark Reshkin indicated that there have been several volunteers for the development of a mission statement. They are: Charlotte Read, Mark Reshkin, J. Allen Johnson, Elizabeth McCloskey, and Mike Molnar. Meeting time, date and location will be sent via email.

NEW BUSINESS

Marquette Greenway Project – Mark Savinski (Representative Pete Visclosky's office)

Mark Reshkin introduced this landmark project, which joins five cities together for a common cause.

Mark Savinski thanked the group for inviting him to speak. The project has been a dream of the Congressman's since 1985. The Congressman feels that the time is right for a project of this scope due to opportunity provided by the contraction of the steel industry. The Congressman met with the Mayors of Whiting, East Chicago, Hammond, Gary, and Portage as well as state Representative Earl Harris.

All five cities agreed to the following principles: (1) Minimum setback from the shoreline of at least 200 feet, (2) Acquire at least 75% of shoreline for public access (From Illinois border to eastern edge of Portage), and (3) continuous bicycle/pedestrian trail from Illinois border to eastern edge of Portage, and

(4) Create a Memorandum of Understanding between the five cities to assure common interest in the project. Press Conference on October 28th at Marquette Park announced the project.

The Lake Michigan Coastal Program awarded \$160,000 from 2002 program implementation grant money. Each city agreed to give \$8,000 cash as match for the project. This does not take away from the money available for the competitive grant program. Mike Molnar further explained that this money was available for projects that address baseline needs or can be used for future planning efforts for the Coastal Program.

Plan is to be an active working plan with proposed routes and alternatives. The work team will select a consultant/university from an RFP process. Expect that the project will be no more than 9 months in duration to allow the Congressman to prepare a request for federal appropriations in the next budget cycle.

Dorreen Carey expressed her view of the project working group. She stated that it has been a great experience and that all parties involved have contributed significantly. Presents a great opportunity to coordinate individual city efforts.

Board members discussed the merits of the proposed process and how it could be incorporated with ongoing efforts in the region. Discussion also focused on the roles of all parties in the region and how individuals could be involved in the process.

2003 Grant Project Selection Announcement

Mike Molnar announced the results of the 2003 Indiana Coastal Grant project review and selection. A total of 6 project proposals were received. Of these the technical review team with input from the CAB recommended to Director Goss that five projects be funded. The applicants received a letter within the last two weeks informing them of their project status. These projects will be forwarded to NOAA for the Federal review and are considered State conditionally approved. The projects are as follows:

Project	Score	Federal Share	Applicant Share	Total
Deep Rivers	95.85	\$66,300	\$65,700	\$132,000
Hoosier Prairie	84.11	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$100,000
Hobart	74.44	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$200,000
Karwick	70.89	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$200,000
Purdue*	35.13	\$36,282	\$17,610	\$53,892
		\$352,582	\$333,310	\$685,892
Unobligated Funds 2003		\$617,418		

* Research project. Current scoring matrix favors land acquisition, preservation, and restoration projects

2004 Grant Project Proposal Summaries

More detailed information regarding each project was prepared prior to the meeting and distributed to Board members and is attached to the minutes. Board member comments are summarized for each project.

Jenny Kintzele introduced the projects proposals received for the 2004 Indiana Coastal Grant Program funding cycle. There are 17 projects in total and represent \$908,837 of requested funds. Organized projects by project type (Number of proposals per category): Education (8), Restoration (2), Research (1), Land Acquisition (2), Planning (2), and Construction (2).

Mike Molnar stated that the LMCP has not been informed of the amount of the federal award for 2004. Thus, any projects selected from this RFP process will be conditionally approved, until the amount available for the 2004 Coastal Grant is identified.

Applicant: Grand Calumet Task Force

Project Title: Environmental Education for Kids (EEK!)

Project Type: Education/Outreach

Federal Request: \$17,843

Local Share: \$9,405

Programmed geared to 5-8 year olds in Lake County. Field trips, lesson plans, interactive website. This is proposed to fund one-year for the program. Gary, Whiting, and East Chicago schools would be involved.

Charlotte Read expressed an interest in seeing how any education project ties into Indiana Education Standards. Board members discussed previous projects conducted by the Task Force. It was suggested that this project be encouraged to partner with the Environmental Learning Center due to the planning involved and how the curriculum fits into the ISTEP test. J. Allen Johnson emphasized that it is important to emphasize that entities coordinate efforts.

Director of Grand Cal taskforce and Outreach Coordinator would work on this program. There were no letters of commitment from any schools.

Applicant: Indiana University Northwest

Project Title: Little Calumet River Prairie and Wetlands

Project Type: Restoration/Enhancement

Federal Request: \$15,131

Local Share: \$24,406

Restore 10 acres along south side of Little Calumet River. Army Corps has constructed 89 acres of wetlands in this area. The project would restore 4 acres of wetland and 6 acres of prairie. This is part of the University Park project. Do have letters of support and permission from the appropriate entities. The project uses volunteer labor

Mark Reshkin stated that project is in a highly visible area and can be used for education regarding restoration activities. The area could be used as an outdoor classroom.

J. Allen Johnson reminded Board members that they agreed not to give sales pitch on projects they have an interest in; in response to some of the comments made by the Chair.

Applicant: Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration (CILC)

Project Title: CILC Lake Coastal Vista: Creating a Community Partnership for Coastal Water Preservation

Project Type: Education/Outreach

Federal Request: \$50,000

Local Share: \$33,000

Project will use video and computer teleconferencing technology. Encourage students to think about coastal issues and have students work together and present recommendations to Coastal Program and local communities. Students work with professional entities in their area and remotely to work on various projects. Would work with high school aged students.

Several members of the Board expressed an interest to see more complete project summaries for the various projects, perhaps an executive summary. Kintzele stated that the applications provide a summary (not to exceed 300 words) currently and that these include language from the applications.

Applicant: University of Michigan

Project Title: Fish spawning and nursery areas in harbors and river mouths with an assessment of spawning and nursery habitat in nearshore Lake Michigan using mapping techniques

Project Type: Research

Federal Request: \$100,000

Local Share: \$67,000

Board members discussed where the state boundary along Calumet harbor is. Majority of Calumet Harbor is in Indiana. Board members stated that this project may be redundant with Ball State studies and Great Lakes Commission work. Charlotte Read inquired whether this is on a list of priorities for the DNR. Board members encouraged the applicant to seek a partnership with Indiana DNR or some other local partners, need clarification on what types of studies have been performed already.

Applicant: City of Hobart, Indiana

Project Title: Jerry Pavese Park – Shoreline Stabilization Project (Phase 2)

Project Type: Restoration/Enhancement

Federal Request: \$35,000

Local Share: \$35,000

Project will stabilize 550 feet at park using bioengineering. This is an extension of the 2003 project that received LMCP funding.

Phase 1 was for approximately 900 lineal feet along the shoreline. Denarie Kane indicated that the ecological improvements include reduced sedimentation, and habitat improvement through the Bioengineered solution. Ongoing maintenance will be performed by the Park Department and the city. This was a recommended project from the 319 watershed plan.

Consensus among board members was that this is a good project and should receive favorable consideration.

Applicant: Aim for the Sun Consortium

Project Title: KAVU! Klear Ahead Visibility Unlimited

Project Type: Education/Outreach

Federal Request: \$100,000

Local Share: \$66,000

Board members felt that this project lacks a clear focus. Project needs more information regarding the substance of the project and support letters from partners.

Applicant: Gary Sanitary District

Project Title: Marquette Park Lagoons Restoration Assessment and Prevention, Public Outreach

Project Type: Education/Outreach

Federal Request: \$100,000

Local Share: \$66,667

Will implement recommendation from Grand Cal Watershed Management Plan of 1998. Plan to work with homeowners that have septic systems doing outreach education concerning maintenance.

Board members discussed what the outcome of this study may be and whether the project is needed. Various members emphasized that sandy soils are not suitable for septic systems that the area should be hooked up to city sewer lines regardless of the outcome of the proposed study.

Applicant: Coffee Creek Watershed Conservancy

Project Title: Watershed Coordinator for the Coffee Creek Watershed

Project Type: Education/Outreach

Federal Request: \$68,837

Local Share: \$46,264

Watershed Coordinator will produce numerous deliverables. Application does not state that the Conservancy plans to request additional funds in the future to pay the salary of the Coordinator. Members discussed the merits of funding a project such as this where funding is used to pay salary of the Coordinator.

Tom Anderson responded that the purpose of this project is to implement the results of a 319 watershed study. The project will coordinate with the City of Chesterton in implementing some of the recommendations.

Mark Reshkin made a general comment that the project priorities established by the Board were to preserve land and restore land where possible. The emphasis was not on education and research. The Board should recommend projects that have a preservation/restoration focus.

Board members continued to discuss the merits of providing funds for a position. Members expressed concern that by funding this project there would be an expectation to continue funds in the future.

Mike Molnar stated that by approving a project the Coastal Program commits to an 18 month funding period. There is not any implied expectation of continuation.

Board members concurred that the projects should be viewed as what is being accomplished not who is being hired.

Applicant: LaPorte County Park Board

Project Title: Joint Management Plan for Sebert County Park and Wintergreen Woods

Project Type: Planning

Federal Request: \$4,392

Local Share: \$2,164

Board members supported the project unanimously with little discussion.

Applicant: Town of Michiana Shores

Project Title: Land Acquisition along White Ditch: Phase 1-b of Preservation of Greenspace and Establishment of a Public Access Nature Trail/Park within Michiana Shores

Project Type: Land Acquisition

Federal Request: \$14,652.50

Local Share: \$14,652.50

Seek to acquire 12 vacant lots. The land in conjunction with other property currently owned by the Town will be used for a walking trail and park area. Property will be owned and managed by the Town as a park, with a conservation easement or deed restriction governing future land use. Project would convey Public Access to the site.

Applicant: Porter County Parks and Recreation Department

Project Title: "Raise the Barn" Phase I

Project Type: Construction

Federal Request: \$65,000

Local Share: \$65,000

Project is seeking funds for the design of a new environmental learning center and includes removal of existing structure. Total project cost is approximately \$1M. Center would provide shelter during inclement weather. Several members indicated that there are areas at the park that should be proposed as projects instead of a project of this type.

Applicant: Indiana Dunes Environmental Learning Center

Project Title: Education and Stewardship in the Cowles Bog Wetland Complex

Project Type: Education/Outreach

Federal Request: \$48,150

Local Share: \$35,106.67

Members inquired as to whether there were letters of support from participating schools. None were provided with the application; however, the Center has established programs already and is not a new program.

Members spoke in favor of the proposed restoration include in the proposal, and the project in general.

Staff mentioned that there were some concerns with the project. The LMCP program area does not include the National Lakeshore. In addition, there would need to be clarification from State Board of Accounts as to whether the proposed “scholarships” are allowable. Staff will seek input from the appropriate parties.

Applicant: Purdue University Calumet

Project Title: Demonstration of oak-savanna restoration in a disturbed Lake Michigan sand dune

Project Type: Research, Education/Outreach

Federal Request: \$38,832

Local Share: \$25,888

Project site is located in West Beach Unit of the National Lakeshore. Members and staff discussed whether the project could be revised to address the federal land issue. Restoration of Oak Savanna is a high priority.

Applicant: City of Michigan City

Project Title: Michigan City Greenways Project

Project Type: Land Acquisition

Federal Request: \$75,000

Local Share: \$75,000

Members discussed the purchase price of the project. The project would acquire two acres for approximately \$150,000. Kintzele stated that the LMCP requires an approved appraisal of the property prior to closing. Acquisition of this land will link two other parcels of city land for public use.

McCloskey stated that all three Michigan City proposals meet the criteria established by the Board.

Applicant: City of Michigan City

Project Title: Hansen Park Reconstruction Study

Project Type: Planning

Federal Request: \$24,000

Local Share: \$16,000

No comments specifically on this project. Comments regarding all three projects were made.

Applicant: City of Michigan City

Project Title: 8th and Dickson Trail Creek Public Access

Project Type: Construction

Federal Request: \$100,000

Local Share: \$100,000

Members discussed the impact that having a design build plan as proposed would have. The City seeks funding for design of the access site as well as the implementation of the plan. Molnar stated that the existing structure of the grant program does not preclude a project such as this. Kintzele stated that the LMCP would review the design prior to approving the construction.

Applicant: Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC)
Project Title: Northwest Indiana Joint Stormwater Quality Public Education and Involvement Program

Project Type: Education/Outreach

Federal Request: \$ 52,000

Local Share: \$200,000

The program would implement a wetland conservation program and a clean marinas initiative. Members discussed whether the communities that agreed to pay into the MS4 program provided letters of support for this project. There were several comments regarding the appropriateness of using funds earmarked for one purpose as match for another purpose. If approved the applicant should be required to obtain letters of support from municipalities that are providing funds for the MS4 education program. Members encourage the applicant to rewrite the proposal and submit for a future funding cycle.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mike Molnar announced the 6217 workgroup meeting would be Monday December 15 at 3:15 PM.

Dorreen Carey stated that there would also be a TMDL meeting at NIRPC that same day.

The next regularly schedule Coastal Advisory Board meeting will be January 21 at a location to be determined.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

ADJOURMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30.

Minutes prepared by Mike Molnar.



In the News

Congressman Pete Visclosky

Proudly Representing Indiana's 1st Congressional District

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Washington, D.C.**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 28, 2003

**VISCLOSKY UNVEILS FIRST STEP
IN RECLAIMING LAKESHORE FOR PUBLIC USE
Congressman spearheads effort to get
five lakefront cities to work together on project**

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Pete Visclosky (D-Merrillville) today announced a historic initiative, the Marquette Green Way Plan, geared toward reclaiming the Lake Michigan shoreline for public use.

Visclosky spearheaded an effort that resulted in the mayors of five lakefront cities signing an agreement to establish a master plan for lakeshore reclamation. The agreement, proposed by Visclosky, was signed by Mayor Robert Bercik of Whiting, Mayor Duane Dedelow of Hammond, Mayor Scott King of Gary, Mayor Douglas Olson of Portage, and Mayor Robert Pastrick of East Chicago. Governor Joe Kernan, Senators Richard Lugar and Evan Bayh, and State Representative Earl Harris have also pledged support for the project. This is the first step in a process to reclaim shoreline for public use that Visclosky has envisioned since taking office in 1985.

“This is a momentous occasion,” Visclosky said. “Today, five cities have come together to begin a project that will benefit all of Northwest Indiana for generations to come. Lake Michigan is our greatest natural resource, and the proper development of its shoreline will create tremendous recreational opportunities and greatly enhance the quality of life of Northwest Indiana residents.”

“Indiana’s lakeshore is a tremendous natural resource and its proper development is important not only to the Northwest Indiana region, but our whole state,” Governor Joseph Kernan said. “I appreciate the efforts of Congressman Visclosky and these five mayors to further explore this opportunity.”

The project calls for procuring land no longer needed by industry and turning it into public parkland, including a pedestrian and bicycle trail that will stretch from the Illinois state line to the eastern boundary of the City of Portage.

Visclosky first proposed reclamation of the lakeshore in a paper titled “The Marquette Project” which he wrote in June, 1985, five months after taking office. In that paper, he noted the importance of a public lakeshore in the development of Chicago, and he proposed that 75 percent of Northwest Indiana’s lakeshore be made available for public use. That figure is the guideline being used for this project, and it is codified as part of the agreement signed by the mayors.

Under the terms of the agreement, each city will pay \$8,000 toward the \$40,000 local match required to receive a \$160,000 Lake Michigan Coastal Grant. The funding, totaling \$200,000, will be used to fund the feasibility study necessary to start the project. The study will develop a map showing with proposed lines for the trail and setbacks from the lake.

There are three guiding principles for the plan, which are part of the agreement signed by the mayors. First, 75 percent of the lakeshore should be recaptured and opened to public use. Second, land recaptured directly on the lakefront should have a minimum setback of 200 feet from the lake. Third, there should be a continuous biking and walking trail from the Illinois state line to the eastern boundary of the City of Portage for all Northwest Indiana residents to enjoy.